



Sphere India

Academy

Association of Humanitarian Agencies in India



Humanitarian Coordination & Resilience Building

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Message from CEO

Dear Readers,

With the summer season upon us, we look back on April 2025—a month that stood out for its dynamic partnerships, forward-thinking initiatives, and collective strides toward resilience.

One of the key highlights was our National Consultation on Heatwave Preparedness, where experts, practitioners, and government partners came together to reflect on the 2024 season and strategize for a more adaptive and coordinated approach moving forward. With rising temperatures posing critical risks to vulnerable populations, our continued engagement through capacity-building sessions—such as the Jharkhand heatwave health response webinar—has been instrumental in equipping frontline workers and health officials to tackle extreme heat effectively.

Our commitment to anticipatory action was further strengthened through the Sphere India Academy's webinar on monsoon preparedness, which emphasized the importance of predictive tools, early warnings, and community-centric planning in averting climate disasters. Likewise, the Academy's sessions on inclusive protection in emergencies and transparency in disaster risk management underlined the values of equity, accountability, and inclusion in all phases of disaster governance.

At the inter-agency level, Sphere India's ongoing consultations with State IAG focal points have surfaced critical insights—ranging from the need for updated coordination mechanisms and capacity-building to enhanced GO-NGO collaboration. These dialogues will shape our roadmap for strengthening IAG networks ahead of the heatwave and monsoon seasons.

As we step into May, let us carry forward the momentum of shared learning, community engagement, and policy advocacy. It is through our collective resolve that we will continue to build a more resilient and inclusive future for all.

Warm Regards,
Vikrant Mahajan
CEO, Sphere India

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Knowledge & Capacity Sharing

Sphere India Academy

Anticipatory Action for Monsoon Preparedness: Strengthening Early Response and Resilience

Sphere India Academy, in collaboration with ADRA India, organized a webinar titled “Anticipatory Action for Monsoon Preparedness: Strengthening Early Response and Resilience” on 11 April 2025. The session focused on leveraging predictive tools and early warning systems to enable timely action before monsoon-related disasters strike. Experts shared insights on anticipatory action frameworks, early warning triggers, inter-agency coordination, and community-based strategies for enhancing resilience against the rising frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events. [Watch here >>](#)

Importance of Biodiversity Conservation and the Role of Youth

Sphere India Academy, in collaboration with Professional Institute for Development and Socio Environmental Management (PRISM), Climate Action Resources Network – Asia Pacific, and Youth Convoive-Warriors of Green, organized a webinar titled Importance of Biodiversity Conservation and the Role of Youth on 27 April 2025. The session focused on the urgent need to protect biodiversity and highlighted the critical role of youth in conservation efforts through advocacy, innovation, and community engagement to strengthen ecosystem resilience and sustainability. [Watch here >>](#)

Inter Agency Coordination

The Inter-Agency Coordination (IAC) Team released one Situation Report on the Ramban flood and issued 9 alerts, including the heatwaves. Between March and April 2025, Sphere India held consultations with State IAG focal persons to enhance disaster preparedness and coordination mechanisms, particularly in light of upcoming heatwave and monsoon risks. Common themes across states included the need for improved coordination with state and district authorities, dedicated human resources for IAG activities, updated NGO databases, capacity-building initiatives, and stronger engagement with government systems. Several states highlighted the importance of structured information sharing, formalisation of IAG mechanisms, and proactive planning through state-level consultations and action plans. Expectations from Sphere India included technical support, policy advocacy, support in needs assessments, and assistance in strengthening GO-NGO coordination at multiple levels.

National Consultation on Strengthening Heat Wave Preparedness and Resilience

A National Consultation on heatwave preparedness, was organized which brought together experts, practitioners, and key stakeholders to reflect on critical lessons from the 2024 heatwave season. It provided a platform to discuss emerging challenges and share best practices related to heatwave risk reduction, early warning dissemination, and community-level preparedness. The consultation emphasized the need for coordinated efforts across sectors to enhance adaptive capacities and build long-term resilience against extreme heat events, especially in vulnerable regions. [Watch here>>](#)

Collaborative Advocacy

Inclusive Protection in Emergencies: Addressing the risks for Persons with Disabilities

Sphere India Academy organized a webinar titled Inclusive Protection in Emergencies: Addressing the risks for Persons with Disabilities on 24 April 2025. The session focused on the disproportionate impacts of disasters on persons with disabilities and the urgent need for inclusive planning, accessible communication, and community participation. Experts highlighted gaps in current DRR frameworks and shared strategies to integrate the rights, needs, and capacities of persons with disabilities into all phases of disaster management. [Watch here>>](#)

Accountability to Affected Population

Promoting Transparency in Disaster Risk Management

Under the Sphere India program vertical - Accountability to Affected Population, a webinar titled “Promoting Transparency in Disaster Risk Management” was organized. The session brought together sector experts and practitioners to examine how transparency serves as a cornerstone for building trust, accountability, and efficiency in disaster preparedness and response. Discussions highlighted persistent challenges such as fragmented data systems, limited access to timely and reliable information at the community level, and gaps in coordination among stakeholders. The panel emphasized the need for robust

frameworks that promote open data sharing, participatory governance, and community engagement, while also ensuring the effective and equitable allocation of resources throughout the disaster management cycle, from preparedness to recovery. [Watch here>>](#)

News from Members

Disaster Law: Principles and Practice

Dr. Amita Singh, Vice Chairperson - Sphere India, launched her book recently titled “Disaster Law: Principles & Practice”. Esteemed dignitaries including Former Judge of Supreme Court and Former Rajya Sabha MP joined in the launch event to celebrate this landmark contribution to the field of law, governance, and disaster resilience. This timely and comprehensive volume delves into the jurisprudential foundations of disaster law, offering deep insights into administrative accountability, legal responsibility, and coordination efforts.

Drawing on extensive field research, the book not only maps global legal frameworks but also proposes actionable strategies that reinforce resilience and sustainability. It highlights the importance of equity, inclusion, and the inherent legal responsibilities societies bear toward all life forms. The book is especially noteworthy for its focus on inclusive policies that amplify the voices of the most marginalized—persons with disabilities, informal workers, and frontline vulnerable communities. [For more information>>](#)

Leh Nutrition Project (LNP) and SEEDS

An Anticipatory Action Plan for Livestock Management in Changthang Region amid Extreme Climate and Fodder Shortages has been collaboratively developed by the Leh Nutrition Project (LNP) and the Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) in partnership with the Changthang community, between February and March 2025. This initiative emerged in response to increasingly erratic snowfall and shifting seasonal cycles that are threatening traditional pastoral livelihoods in Ladakh. Focused on preparedness and risk reduction, the action plan integrates community-led fodder banks, early warning systems, and improved shelter strategies for livestock. Through local consultations, participatory planning, and indigenous knowledge, the project has built a roadmap to protect the localized pastoral economy from future climate shocks. This action plan marks an important step towards enhancing climate resilience in high-altitude ecosystems, reinforcing the role of communities as frontline responders in the face of climate-induced disasters.

Updates from Inter-Agency Groups and State Networks

Heatwave Preparedness: Strengthening Health Response in Jharkhand (Hindi)

In a concerted effort to strengthen heatwave preparedness and protect vulnerable communities in Jharkhand, a webinar titled “Heatwave Preparedness: Strengthening Health Response in Jharkhand” was organized on 29 April 2025 by Sphere India Academy, in collaboration with IAG Jharkhand and the Government of Jharkhand. The session brought together District Program Officers, Health Department Nodal Officers, and frontline stakeholders to build their capacity in effectively managing heat-related illnesses. Drawing on recent experiences and challenges from across the state, experts highlighted the importance of early identification of symptoms, timely first aid and referral, and the pivotal role played by ASHA workers and other community-based health personnel. Emphasis was placed on improving coordination, strengthening local response systems, and equipping frontline workers with practical tools and knowledge to reduce heat-induced morbidity and mortality, particularly in high-risk districts like Palamu, Garhwa, and Latehar. [Watch here>>](#)

Updates from the Government

High-Level Committee Approves ₹1280.35 Crore Aid for Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry

Reinforcing its commitment to stand with states during disasters, the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved ₹1280.35 crore of additional Central assistance for Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry. The High-Level Committee (HLC) chaired by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah sanctioned the aid for damages caused by floods, cloudbursts, landslides, and cyclical storms during 2024.

The approval includes ₹1247.29 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for three states, and ₹33.06 crore for Puducherry, adjusting for available balances in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Of the total amount, ₹588.73 crore has been allocated to Bihar, ₹136.22 crore to Himachal Pradesh, ₹522.34 crore to Tamil Nadu, and ₹33.06 crore to Puducherry. This assistance is over and above regular SDRF and UDRF allocations. In FY 2024-25, the Centre has already released ₹20,264.40 crore to 28 States under SDRF, ₹561.60 crore under NDRF to 19 States, ₹4984.25 crore under SDRF to 19 States, and ₹719.72 crore under NDRF to 8 States. Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) were promptly deployed for damage assessments. [Read more>>](#)

Union Minister reviews Weather and Disaster Preparedness with IMD, Key Ministries

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh chaired a high-level meeting with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and key ministries to review India's weather and disaster preparedness. Emphasizing the need for real-time, impact-based forecasting, he called for rapid expansion of Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) coverage and modernization of meteorological systems. The Minister directed the installation of 50 additional Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) in Delhi, aiming for 100 in the long term, to align the capital's forecasting infrastructure with global standards. Plans were also reviewed to increase India's Doppler radar network from 37 to 73 by 2025-26 and to 126 by 2036, covering critical regions like Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, and Port Blair. Progress under “Mission Mausam,” including advancements in satellite meteorology and numerical prediction models, was discussed. Dr. Singh stressed that improved forecasting will benefit disaster management, farmers, fishermen, aviation, and other key sectors. He urged ministries to expedite approvals and funding for critical weather infrastructure projects, reinforcing India's commitment to building a resilient, climate-ready nation. [Read More>>](#)

Maharashtra Govt Inaugurates Modernized State Emergency Operation Center

The Maharashtra Emergency Department, Government of Maharashtra, in collaboration with Palladium India, has inaugurated the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) at Mantralaya, Mumbai. Designed as an integrated command-and-control hub, the SEOC will enhance the state's disaster preparedness, response, and coordination efforts.

The SEOC was officially inaugurated on April 8 by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, alongside Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan, among others. The SEOC was officially inaugurated on April 8 by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, alongside Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan, among others. The SEOC was officially inaugurated on April 8 by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, alongside Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan, among others.

senior leaders and officials. Completed within an ambitious timeline of just 100 days, the SEOC stands as a model of effective governance, unified vision, and seamless collaboration. Amit Patiloshi, CEO of Palladium India, remarked, “This SEOC marks a transformative step in disaster risk governance in India by integrating advanced geospatial analytics, real-time data, and AI-driven decision-making into government operations. Maharashtra is setting a new benchmark for disaster resilience. Palladium is honoured to partner with the Government of Maharashtra in enabling this innovation to better protect lives, assets, and livelihoods.” The SEOC initiative reaffirms Maharashtra's commitment to building a safer, more resilient future through technology-driven solutions.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta unveils action plan to combat heatwaves

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced the Delhi Heat Action Plan 2025 on April 21, 2025, introducing urgent measures to address the Capital's intensifying heatwaves. Calling heatwaves a “deadly crisis,” the CM outlined key initiatives including the installation of 3,000 water coolers, dissemination of heatwave alerts via SMS and media, and the establishment of dedicated heatwave wards in government hospitals. Hospitals have been directed to set up ICU-equipped wards with essential medicines for heatstroke patients. Cooling centres will be established in densely populated areas, especially near slums and foodpans. Additional features of the plan include implementing cool roof technology on government buildings, creating more shaded spaces at bus stops, and opening assistance centres in low-income neighbourhoods. Chief Minister Ms. Gupta also welcomed 1,800 “Aapda Mitra” disaster volunteers from the Central Government, who will act as frontline responders. The plan prioritizes vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, outdoor workers, women, economically weaker sections, persons with disabilities, and individuals with chronic illnesses. The Delhi Heat Action Plan aims to build a safer, more resilient city in the face of extreme weather challenges. [Read More>>](#)

NDMA Conducts National Workshop on Post-Disaster Mental Health ‘Calm Amid Chaos

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF, organized a two-day National Workshop on “Navigating Post-disaster Mental Health” at Vijaya Bhawan, New Delhi, on 16-17 April 2025. Shri Rajendra Singh, Member & HoD, NDMA, highlighted the importance of community empowerment and institutionalizing mental health in disaster management. The inaugural session featured key notes including Lt. Gen. Syed Alta Hasnain and Dr. K.S. Vatsa, Members, NDMA, and Ms. L.S. Changsan, Additional Secretary, MoH&FW. Dignitaries also launched NDMA's Compendium on ‘Monsoon Resilience and its Impact on India's Hazardscape’.

Day 1 brought together experts from government departments, UN agencies, healthcare institutions, and CSOs to deliberate on strengthening psychosocial support for disaster survivors. Lt. Gen. Hasnain emphasized the role of technology, sensitization of caregivers, and community empowerment in psychosocial support. Day 2 focused on state-level case studies and a roadmap for the future. Sessions included practical discussions on strategies adopted by SDMA's and NDRF, a group activity on MHPPS strategies, and an engaging session on financial strategies for supporting mental health, featuring insights from the Department of Financial Services, World Bank, and NGOs.

NDMA Workshop on Disaster Risk Financing for States: Lessons learned from XV Finance Commission & Way Forward for XVI Finance Commission

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in collaboration with UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP), organized a two-day national workshop titled “Disaster Risk Financing for States: Lessons Learned from XV Finance Commission & Way Forward for XVI Finance Commission” on 28-29 April 2025 at the Hyatt Regency, New Delhi. The workshop served as a high-level platform to address the progress made in disaster risk financing (DRF) mechanisms across the country and to chart a future roadmap in alignment with the upcoming XVI Finance Commission.

Bringing together senior officials from NDMA, Ministry of Home Affairs, State Disaster Management Authorities, representatives from key ministries, international development partners, and financial experts, the event aimed to strengthen the policy and operational framework for DRF in India. It focused on drawing lessons from the implementation of the XV Finance Commission's recommendations, exploring new financing windows, standardising processes, and advancing tools such as the Disaster Risk Index (DRI) to support evidence-based allocation of funds.

Day 1 of the workshop featured sessions on the evolution of disaster risk financing in India, the design and methodology of the XV Finance Commission, standardisation of funding mechanisms, and the development of the Disaster Risk Index (DRI).

Day 2 focused on aligning DRF with climate change impacts, enhancing capacities at the state and national levels, exploring innovative financing models, and presenting strategic recommendations for the XVI Finance Commission.

Gujarat launches Heat Action Plan for 10 cities to tackle rising temperatures

On 24 and 25 April, the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA), in collaboration with respective city authorities and with technical support from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), launched the first batch of Heat Action Plans (HAPs) for 10 cities - Surat, Junagadh, Veraval, Navsari, Bhavnagar, Bhuj, Palanpur, Idar, Radhanpur, and Vadod. This marks a significant milestone in Gujarat's proactive approach to climate resilience, particularly in the face of escalating heat risks. Gujarat is increasingly vulnerable to both dry and humid heat conditions, with rising instances of severe heatwaves, warmer nights, and increased humidity. These localized HAPs offer a structured and scientific framework to address these challenges.

The plans include a detailed emergency response strategy for government field departments, ward-level heat risk assessments based on current and projected data, and sustainable urban cooling solutions such as increased green cover and reflective surfaces. They also emphasize strengthening healthcare infrastructure to respond to heat-related illnesses and leveraging existing government schemes and funds to support heat resilience initiatives. By integrating scientific evidence, community needs, and inter-departmental coordination, these HAPs demonstrate a forward-looking model for climate preparedness. We are proud to have partnered with GSDMA and the cities in this journey, supporting them in translating data into action and making heat resilience a core part of urban planning and governance.

World Health Summit Regional Meeting - New Delhi, 2025

The World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2025 concluded on a historic note at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, marking India's first time hosting this prestigious global event. Over three transformative days, the summit brought together more than 5,000 delegates, from 54 countries, with 160+ sessions and 950+ speakers. Notable global institutions like WHO SEARO, UNICEF, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered to address the pressing health challenges of our time.

India takes immense pride in hosting the summit, which served as a platform for equitable health solutions. Prof. (Dr.) Galvir S. Tomar, International President of the World Health Summit, lauded India's ongoing efforts in transforming its healthcare landscape through initiatives like Ayushman Bharat and acknowledged the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, in driving health reforms that benefit millions across the nation. Several key ministers from the Government of India were present, further emphasizing India's commitment to global health. Shri Mansukh L. Mandavaya, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, highlighted India's strides towards universal health coverage. Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, reflected on India's achievements in improving healthcare access, including initiatives like building toilets in every village and ensuring clean tap water. Their participation underscored the country's leadership in shaping a healthier, more equitable future. The summit, with its focus on scaling access to ensure health equity, reinforced India's role as a leader in global health transformation, setting new standards for international collaboration and knowledge exchange. As Prof. Tomar aptly noted, “This is not just a summit, it is a global health movement.”

Climate Corner

Child In Need Institute (CINI) India Community-led Climate Champions Drive Resilient Village Planning

Child In Need Institute's assessment in Gumla district covering 94 respondents found widespread climate challenges like water scarcity, pollution, deforestation and irregular rainfall, highlighting the need for community resilience interventions. In response to these findings, 44 Climate Champions elected by the community to lead awareness and advocacy on climate issues have garnered support of Panchayat Mukhiyas to bring into panchayat planning a budget of approximately ₹20 lakh per Panchayat under the GDPD, “Clean and Green Village” theme. (2025). These champions emerged from 22 villages in 5 Panchayats of Raidih block, Gumla, where CINI, with support from KfW, implemented a climate-resilient resilience project. The aim was to pilot a community-led climate resilience project. The KfW was to pilot a climate-resilient resilience project. The KfW was to pilot a climate-resilient resilience project.

The case of Nature ID: How Digital Public Infrastructure can catalyze nature and climate action

As the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss intensify, fragmented environmental data continues to hinder large-scale, coordinated conservation efforts. The concept of **Nature ID**—a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) approach to environmental data—offers a powerful solution. Instead of building a single repository, Nature ID would serve as an interoperable layer linking diverse datasets, including remote sensing, administrative records, and Indigenous knowledge. Inspired by initiatives like Brazil's *Cadastro Ambiental Rural* and India's *Forest Stack*, Nature ID could enable more inclusive, transparent, and adaptive decision-making for land use, conservation, and climate action. By empowering local communities to verify claims and steward ecosystems, and by enhancing access to trusted data for governance and finance, Nature ID represents a transformative step toward environmental justice and sustainable development. [Read here>>](#)

Guidelines: Gender-responsive and socially inclusive climate cost-benefit analysis

Traditional cost-benefit analyses often miss a critical piece of the puzzle: climate change doesn't affect everyone equally. The new Gender-Responsive and Socially Inclusive Cost-Benefit Analysis (GSCBA) Guidelines by UNDP aim to correct that. These guidelines recognize that women, Indigenous peoples, informal workers, and other vulnerable groups—especially in the Global South—bear the brunt of climate impacts, yet are often left out of the planning, financing, and decision-making that shapes climate action. The GSCBA Guidelines provide governments—particularly Ministries of Finance, Planning, and Environment—with a robust framework to integrate gender equity and social inclusion into adaptation and mitigation investments. From drought-resilient infrastructure to clean energy transitions, these tools help assess not just what's efficient or cost-effective, but who gains, who is left behind, and how to design more equitable outcomes. This approach is especially critical for countries in Africa and the MENA region, where climate risks are escalating and resources are tight.

The guidelines support a shift from reactive spending to proactive, risk-informed, and socially-just investments, helping policymakers and donors prioritize initiatives that build resilience and empower marginalized communities. At its core, this is more than a technical tool—it's a mindset shift. It reframes economic efficiency to include social equity and climate justice, making it a vital resource for anyone shaping climate policy or public finance in vulnerable contexts. [Read here>>](#)

Climate Smart Gram Panchayat Action Plans (CSGPAP) for Uttar Pradesh (UP)

Uttar Pradesh, one of India's most climate-vulnerable states, is leading a transformative bottom-up approach to rural resilience through its Climate Smart Gram Panchayat Action Plan (CSGPAP). Developed by the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (DoEFCC), this first-of-its-kind framework empowers over 58,000 Gram Panchayats with practical tools to assess climate risks, track local emissions, and implement tailored adaptation strategies. Rooted in community participation and aligned with existing schemes like MGNREGA, the plan blends scientific rigor with local knowledge to create sustainable, village-led climate solutions. Already piloted across 170+ villages, reaching over 2.5 lakh people, CSGPAP sets a compelling precedent for climate governance that is not imposed but co-created—grounded in everyday realities, and designed to build long-term resilience across rural India. By offering a clear SOP, participatory methods, and integration with disaster preparedness and green livelihoods, this model has the potential to reshape how climate action is localized, inclusive, and future-ready. [Read here>>](#)

Updates from Global Humanitarian Community

Global Disability Inclusion Report

The *Global Disability Inclusion Report: Accelerating Disability Inclusion in a Changing and Diverse World*, launched at the Global Disability Summit 2025, offers critical insights into how today's global shifts—such as climate change, technological advancement, urbanization, and humanitarian crises—affect the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Developed collaboratively by UN agencies, the International Disability Alliance, the International Disability and Development Consortium, academia, and supported by the German BMJZ, UK FCO, and the London Stock Exchange Group, the report emphasizes the diversity and inequality faced by persons with disabilities across the life cycle. It outlines key structural reforms, global challenges, and enabling strategies to advance inclusion across sectors like education, healthcare, employment, and social protection. The report also highlights the importance of financing and cross-sector collaboration to build inclusive, equitable systems for all. [Read here>>](#)

Policy Note on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Water Resource Management

Gender mainstreaming is a critical pillar for achieving integrated water resources management (WRM), and the UNEP-DHI Centre, in partnership with the Global Water Partnership and UN-Women, has taken a leading role in advancing this agenda. Their recently released Policy Note is a compelling call to action for governments, institutions, and communities to strengthen gender equality efforts within the water sector. With the global average for gender mainstreaming in water management currently at just 58%—and only 27% of countries having fully met their gender objectives—progress must be significantly accelerated to meet SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) by 2030. The Policy Note outlines seven key enablers to guide this transformation: political commitment, gender-inclusive laws and governance, dedicated funding and capacity, women's participation and leadership, robust monitoring systems, education and awareness initiatives, and multi-stakeholder coordination across sectors. Drawing from successful country case studies, it emphasizes that systemic change—such as shifting gender norms and dismantling stereotypes—is essential. Water, climate, and environment institutions must embed gender at every level of their operations, working closely with national gender equality bodies. This integrated, intersectional approach will lead to more inclusive decision-making and greater resilience to the climate crisis, pollution, and biodiversity loss. Read the full Policy Note to explore how countries can jointly advance both gender equality and sustainable water management. [Read here>>](#)

Accelerating sustainable urban futures

A new guide titled *Accelerating Sustainable Urban Futures* offers a practical, step-by-step approach to challenge-driven innovation—an emerging method that puts real urban problems at the center of collaborative, cross-sectoral solution-making. Developed by UN-Habitat and Challenge Works, the guide is designed by city governments, innovators, NGOs, and other stakeholders working to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially through partnerships (SDG 17). Rather than chasing buzzwords, challenge-driven innovation focuses on clearly defined local challenges, community engagement, and inclusive diverse actors to generate scalable, sustainable solutions. It expands the innovation ecosystem by inviting private actors—residents, startups, researchers, and public institutions—to contribute to system-level change, influence policy, and unlock new investments. The guide stresses that true innovation isn't just about a great pilot idea; it's about building the infrastructure, trust, and pathways needed to embed and scale what works. Packed with real-world examples, practical tips, and insights into the limits of traditional procurement, the guide offers a refreshing, grounded take on how cities can use innovation to deliver more inclusive, resilient futures. To explore the full resource, search for “Accelerating Sustainable Urban Futures.” [Read here>>](#)

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2025

Mountains and alpine glaciers—often called the world's “water towers”—provide freshwater to over half of the global population, sustaining ecosystems, communities, and economies downstream. But these vital natural systems are now reaching a tipping point. The 2025 *United Nations World Water Development Report*, titled *Mountains and Glaciers: Water Towers*, delivers a stark warning: climate change, unsustainable land use, and increasing human pressure are rapidly degrading these fragile ecosystems. Glacial retreat, disrupted rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are already threatening water availability, with direct consequences for food production, energy access, public health, and disaster risk reduction. The report doesn't just highlight the urgency—it also charts a path forward. It calls for an integrated, inclusive approach to water management in mountain regions. Key priorities include the adoption of sustainable and nature-based solutions, investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, and recognition of Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Strengthened transboundary cooperation and increased financing are also critical to ensure water security across generations and to share these vulnerable resources. This is not just an environmental issue—it's a human one. As the ice melts and ecosystems shift, the lives of billions are at stake. The message is clear: addressing the global water crisis must start at the top—by protecting the world's mountains and glaciers. [Read here>>](#)

The Global Commission on Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Report

In an era marked by conflict, climate change, displacement, and rising inequalities, modern slavery and human trafficking are tragically on the rise, hidden in plain sight and affecting millions across the globe. The Global Commission's latest report, is a powerful wake-up call. It underscores that no country, community, or sector is untouched by this grave human rights abuse. What makes this report stand out is its collaborative and survivor-centered approach. Drawing on the voices of people with lived experience, as well as input from academics, NGOs, business leaders, and policymakers, the report offers practical, actionable recommendations for governments, civil society, international organisations, and the private sector. It urges a unified global effort - one that not only addresses policy and legal gaps, but also tackles the systemic root causes of exploitation. Ending modern slavery requires sustained commitment, cooperation, and courageous leadership from every corner of society. [Read here>>](#)

Disasters Losses and Damages Data

Reliable data on disaster losses and damages is fundamental for effective preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction. It helps quantify economic impacts, reveal root causes, track shifts in exposure and vulnerability, and assess the risk of cascading hazards. Yet, many countries still lack systematic data collection, with major gaps in methods, coverage, and governance. To bridge this divide, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) are jointly working to develop an enhanced disaster tracking system tailored for national use. This system aims to help countries update and institutionalize their disaster data practices. A new report and a live repository of global case studies showcase how improved data systems can support smarter, more inclusive decision-making. Better disaster data is not just a technical upgrade — it's a cornerstone for building long-term resilience in the face of rising climate and disaster risks. [Read here>>](#)

2024 Disasters in Numbers

The year 2024 was marked by a troubling escalation in climate-related disasters, with the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) recording 393 natural hazard events worldwide, causing 16,753 deaths and affecting over 167 million people. Economic losses surged to nearly US\$242 billion. While the overall death toll remained below the 20-year average—largely due to the absence of singularly catastrophic events like major earthquakes or tsunamis—the cumulative toll of extreme weather, particularly heat waves, floods, storms, and droughts, was profound and widespread. Asia faced unprecedented heat, with temperatures exceeding 50°C during the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, tragically claiming over 1,300 lives. Across India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, heat waves caused hundreds of reported deaths and affected millions, especially children. Meanwhile, Africa grappled with deadly floods and devastating droughts that pushed millions into food and water insecurity. In the USA, hurricanes and droughts alone caused damages exceeding US\$100 billion, underscoring the financial burden of intensifying climate events.

climate events. Countries like Japan, Papua New Guinea, and Afghanistan faced severe earthquakes, landslides, and winter disasters, adding to the global toll. Southeast Asia endured deadly cyclones, notably Typhoon Yagi and Gaemi, which together affected tens of millions. Billion-dollar like Europe and South America were not spared—Italy, Greece, and Spain faced excess mortality and billion-dollar damages from heat and floods, while Brazil's Amazon saw one of its worst droughts in centuries. These events reinforce the urgent need for scaled-up climate adaptation, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction strategies. As the impacts of climate change intensify, the 2024 data paint a clear and urgent picture: the world must take up to protect lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems from the accelerating risks of natural hazards. [Read here>>](#)

Grants and Opportunities

Impact Awards Programme 2025

AI for good has introduced this award programme to honor outstanding accomplishments in the field of artificial intelligence, highlighting innovative, sustainable, and impactful AI solutions that drive global development.

Organization: AI for Good
Deadline: 15th May 2025
[More information >>](#)

The Ending Impacts RFP – Archaeology of Sustainability

Invites research using archaeology and interdisciplinary data to understand past human-environment interactions and inform today's sustainability and climate resilience strategies.

Organization: National Geographic Society
Deadline: 1st July 2025
[More information>>](#)

SustainE Young Researchers Award

Inviting scholars under 40 to submit original research on sustainability across areas like environment, energy, equity, and economics. The winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, mentor